

A Copy of a Letter Written the third of September 1651. by John Hedworth of Harraton in the County of Durham Esquire, unto John Dodgson Constable at Harraton, John Lax a Leader of Coles there, Steven Pattafon a Stathe-man there, Ralph Hinderfon a Leader of Coles there, Robert Vickars Overman there, Thomas Rutlas a Digger of Coles there; and to all other Workmen whatever, that belong either to the Colepias, Statshes, or Keels of Harraton Colliery.

**N**eighbours all, Though I have never but dealt Neighbourly with you all; yet divers of you have dealt otherwise with me: and yet before I take that course against you that both nature, Law, and reason will afford me: I cannot but hereby under my hand acquaint you. That per advice upon Saturday last was 7 days, being the 23 of August 1651. I went to James Liddall your Steward or Overseer, and in the presence of Richard Lilburn Esquire; Lieut. Col. John Lilburn his son; and Mr. Richard Grey my brother in Law; And told him, That Sir John Hedworth deceased, my Father, was Lord, Owner and Proprietor of the Mannor of Harraton, and all the Colermines there-

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unto belonging; which were now Legally and justly descended unto, or upon me, as his Eldest Son and Heir: and being of late fully attained to the age of 21 years, I could not in silence suffer my self any longer to be deprived of my Right and Inheritance by will and power. And therefore I told him that he as Steward, set Workmen at work upon my Cole-mines, against my will and minde; and it must be under the pretence of a Lease belonging to Mr. Josiah Primate, or to Mr. Thomas Wray; but whether of them had the most right to the said Lease, it was not much material to me now. But sure I was, that by both their leases (under one of which the (I am sure) present possessors claims) there is a rent reserved of 40s per week to be paid to the said Sr. John Hedworth my father, or his heirs, for their House-keeping, in case there be so many Coles wrought as amounts to so much money; with a clause of Re-entry upon the said Colliery for the said Sir John Hedworth and his Heirs, in case of non-payment of the said 40 shillings a week rent. And I further told him, I was therefore in a fair and friendly way come unto him with these my friends, as my witnesses, to demand of him my said 40 shillings rent for the last week, and forty shillings per week for all the rest of the weeks arrear, ever since his Master Sir *Arthur Hesilrig*, or any other of his Masters wrought them: And in case immediate payment thereof was not made, I would make a formall seizure of the said Cole-mines,



Cole-mines, and discharge all Persons whatsoever from working thereof. And in case they would not cease, I would do my best (as by Law, equity, and Reason I might) to sink the Keel, and break the Ginns that should endeavour to work and carry away my Coles, seeing my Tenants could have no Legall fair proceedings, either from Sir *Arthur*, or the Commissioners above; and therefore as a Civil man, desired him to go to his Master Sir *Arthur Haslerig*, or to Major *Tolhurst*, or whom else he pleased, and acquaint them with so much, that so in a fair way I might have paid unto me without delay my said Rent, and all the Arrears thereof since they wrought my Colliery, which is now about two years: And he taking his horse that day, and riding off the ground; At night the same day I repaired again to the said *James Liddall* your Steward, accompanied with my Uncle, Master *Ralph Rocksby*, and my Brother Master *Richard Grey*, and demanded his answer; which was, That he had been with Major *Tolhurst*, who had authorized him to tell me, That he would pay me no Rent at all, but that I must seek it where I could get it; and being denied my own, the aforesaid Saturday night, I discharged all the work-men I could meet with, and commanded them at their perils to cease to meddle in any kinde with my Cole-mines, without my exprels leave and consent.

And carrying a tender regard to the peace and welfare of my Native Countrey, now invaded by

robbers and strangers. And for avoiding as much as in me lay the just occasion of raising any tumults that might seem to have the face of any advantage to our publick enemies (the aforesaid invaders) I was as sparing as could be in doing of that which was necessary for me to do, in order for regaining my own right and just inheritance, which hath bin by force and violence taken from me and my Tenants, and to this day as unjustly detained from us both, without the least shadow or colour of Law or Justice (as my true friend and Counsellor Lieutenant Collopel *John Lilburn* hath fully proved in his Epistle to four of the Commissioners for Compounding, sitting at Haberdashers Hall at London, dated the 30 of July 1651, a Printed Coppie of which I herewith send you for your serious perusal) and therefore with an Hatcher, I onely cut two of the Ropes that drew up the water; and the next day being Sunday, came five men in the habit of Countrey men (and so calling themselves) with great Cudgels in their hands, pretending they came to keep the States right; but yet afterwards the aforesaid *Liddal*, your chief Steward, and one *Richard Gillery*, another of your inferiour Stewards, or Overseers, told me, and some of my friends, that they were Soldiers, and of the said Major *Tolbursts* own Company. And further, the said *Liddall* told me, in the presence of my aforesaid Uncle and Brother, That the said Major *Tolburst* told him, that I must not strive with him for the Collie-

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ry, unless I could bring thirty thousand men by  
force to take it from him. And upon Monday af-  
ter, being the 25 of August 1651, *Ralph Hinderson*,  
*Stephen Patteson*, and others, were leading of my  
Coles, which by my authority were discharged  
from leading thereof by my Father in Law Master  
*George Gray*; and did all accordingly cease; but there  
being since an addition of six Soldiers armed with  
Pistols and Swords, said to be of the said Major  
*Talbursts* own Company; but yet produced no  
Commission under any mans hand (but absolutely  
denying that they have any such) but onely act by  
the verball (and unwarrantable) order of the said  
Major, a man that hath no power nor authority at  
all to command them hither: And yet like men  
subject to no Law, Rule or Government; by their  
wills, Swords and Pistols, they assume unto them-  
selves a power to set a Guard upon my Colepits  
both night and day (after I am violently robbed of  
almost threescore head of my Cattel, and a great  
part of my Land of Inheritance by *Sir Arthur Hasle-  
rig* and the Commissioners of Sequestration) and  
threaten, beat, most shamefully abuse, nail up the  
dores, force quarters from, and compel severall of  
my friends and neighbours to yoke in their Hor-  
ses and Oxen into Wains and Carts, and to lead  
my Coles; nay, and have come to my self, and have  
commanded, and violently hindered me to lead  
my own Corn, and would produce unto me no  
written Commission or Order they had from any  
man

man so to do, although I earnestly demanded it of them: Upon which I yesterday, being the second of *September* present, repaired to *Durham* to Collo-  
nel *Francis Wren*, and Master *Thomas Dallvoel*, Com-  
missioners for Sequestration for this County, and  
in the presence of my said Father *Grey*, and his Son  
Master *George Grey*, acquainted them herewith, and  
desired to know of them if the said Soldiers had  
their Order for comming to the said *Harraton*, and  
using me as they do; and they both averred they  
had none of theirs, nor they never heard any thing  
of it, untill I told them. In which regard, I have  
no other ground at all, but to look upon the said  
pretended Soldiers (as a company of desolate per-  
sons, sturdy rogues, theeves, and robbers) and as  
such most fit by the Civil Magistrate to be appre-  
hended, and clapt in Goal, there to be kept untill  
they receive a Tryall for their lives, which I shall  
endeavour to do, to the utmost that Law will in-  
able me; but in the interim I desire you at your pe-  
rils (unless they produce you a Legall and written  
Commission, or order under some Hand or Hands  
legally authorized thereunto, to Quarter upon  
you, and command you as they do) That you no  
longer entertain them upon my ground, which  
Order I am sure of it must be under two of the  
Commissioners hands of Sequestration, none else  
in this County having any power to pretend to  
send Soldiers to me, by violence to keep my estate  
from me, being neither Papist nor Delinquent; and

I am sure of it, Sir *Arthur Haslerig* at most is but one Comtmissioner (if that) and his Major *Tolhurst* none at all. And therefore his written Warrant is no ways to be obeyed by you; who are no way under his Jurisdiction. But however, what written Warrant is sent unto you from any hand whatever, I desire to see it, and to take a Coppie of it. And I further advise you upon sight hereof, for your own safety, That you repair to Sir *Arthur Haslerig* himself, and acquaint him with all passages, and desire to know whether he will justifie that he hath given a written Order to his Soldiers to come to *Harraton*, and to do as they do; and if he say no: then do you desire him to send for them as prisoners, and severely punish them according to Law and Justice, and all thole that have so unwarrantably sent them: And also that you repair to Major *Tolhurst*, and tell him what is done, and know of him whether he sent them, or no, and will justifie it; and in default of satisfaction from him, repair to the said Commissioners, and demand of them their pleasure in the thing, as also their Order to command them away. And I further warn you; and every of you, without a written Order from some Legall Magistrate or other; meddle nor make nor with (upon any verball command from any power whatsoever) to digg any more of my Coles in *Harraton* Colliery, to draw them, or any water out of my Pits, to throw them on the banks, lead them to the Water side, or any other place whatsoever,



whatsoever, to carry any of them away by Keels,  
Lyters, Waines, Carrs, or any other means what-  
soever, at your utmost peril of being apprehended  
by me, according to Law, as Theeves and Rob-  
bers of me, of my goods and Chattels: And ha-  
ving all other extremities exercised towards you,  
that the Law will afford me to inflict upon you,  
or any of you.

And this I send you on purpose to forewarn you  
of your own danger, and to leave you without the  
least excuse, both before God and man. And  
in the presence of those whose names as witnesses  
are hereunto Subscribed, I set my Hand at my own  
House at *Harraton* this third day of September 1651.

Witness

*John Hedworth.*

*Richard Lilburn*

*John Lilburn*

*George Grey*

*Ralph Grey.*





